The Bedouin Problem

The Bedouin cannot live in the desert without maintaining regular contact with the domain of settled society where he trades the surplus products of his economy for essential provisions. 361 609 621

In the past, the Bedouin have entered the cultivated zone either as conquerors, reducing the peasants to a state of semi-slavery and transforming fertile land into pastures for their herds, or as peaceful guests.[1)]

The conduct of the Bedouin on the outskirts of the settled region is determined by the ability of the government to defend the country and impose restrictive measures on the nomads. Once they accept the idea of compliance with certain conditions, they will soon become semi-nomadic and evolve towards sedentarization.

The substance of Bedouin policy in all the countries of the Middle East is the attempt by the political authorities to subject the nomads to a restrictive code of behavior calculated to protect the settled population, and to organize, facilitate, direct and accelerate their sedentarization. 361 166x

The Crisis in the Bedouin World

In modern times the settlement of the nomads has been regarded as one of the outstanding domestic problems in Arabia and the countries of the Fertile Crescent. The issue has been forced to a head by the crisis which the Bedouin world is under- 361 166x 178

---

1. Muller, 1931, pp 18-19

361 going in the wake of profound political, economic and social
X166 changes:
178 a. political

The national governments of the Bedouin-inhabited countries, unwilling to have the tribes under their territorial jurisdiction remain as a separate social unit outside the national community, consider their permanent settlement on land absolutely essential to insure stability and progress. They are aware that, once the nomads become tied to the soil, the tribal system will begin to disintegrate and cease being a "state within a state." By controlling the Bedouin and encouraging their settlement, the administrations are putting an end to the special political status which the tribes enjoyed on the borders of the desert.

b. economic

361 With the conquest of the desert by modern means of trans-
X166 portation the camel-breeding industry of the true Bedouin has
178 been severely hit. Enforcement of public security destroyed
433 additional sources of livelihood, such as the plunder of caravans, inter-tribal raiding and the extortion of Khuwa[1] from village communities and weaker semi-nomadic tribes. Extension of cultivation in the area is rapidly limiting the wandering territory of the tribes and thus adversely affecting their traditional pastoral economy.

---

721 1. Bedouin raids are usually directed against other tribes or
728 caravans which are attacked and plundered. The toll which is frequently levied on the agricultural settlements on the fringe of the desert is called by the name khuwa, protection money.

With the improvements of communication and construction of pipe- 369 178
lines there has been an ever-increasing mutual contact between the nomads and the settled people of village and town. While tribal sheikhs are the first to come under the influence of modernization, the tribesmen are also gradually adopting the mode of existence of settled society.

CHAPTER 1

Definition of the Area under Consideration

361 121
This paper will limit itself primarily to the problem of sedentarisation of the nomadic populations in the countries of the Fertile Crescent, that is: Iraq, Syria, Jordan (Transjordan) and Israel (Palestine), an area which distinguishes itself by its Moslem Arab majority,[1] its striking similarities of natural environment and social organization. Saudi Arabia was included in this study because of the inter-relations which exist between the Bedouin of the Arabian and Syrian deserts. Tribes of the Anezeh Confederation wander from Saudi Arabia through Jordan into Syria and back and sections of the Shammar migrate back and forth between Arabia and Iraq.

Desert and Soil

132 133
The chief common natural feature of the area is of a geo-

---

1. With the exception of the Kurdish language used by the Kurds in Syria and Iraq, Aramaic spoken by the Nestorian Christians in Kurdistan and in a few villages in Syria, and Hebrew spoken by the Jewish community of Israel, the area is Arabic in character.

Social characteristics of the people

M
The population of practically the entire area consists of 369
two distinct social groups, the nomadic and settled elements. Just B
as the two contrasting physical characteristics of the area, the 178
desert and the sown, cannot be clearly defined, the lines of
demarcation between the social groups are fluid as the social
structure is constantly in the process of changes. As the transi-
tion from the desert to cultivable land is gradual, society can be
found in all stages of transformation from purely nomadic to fully
settled. The degree of transition varies; in some regions Bedouin
society has remained almost unchanged, in others nomadism is
practically extinct.

Changes in the landscape

M
History of the past and experiences of the present clearly 311
show that the frontiers of the desert fluctuate, at times culti-
vation being extended into the desert, at times the desert invading
the domain of the sown. The ruins which lie in the desert, partic- M 174
ularly on its margins, bear witness to the brilliant past of the 311
Fertile Crescent. A richness of culture and an intensity of
economic exploitation must have prevailed in localities where today
there is no adequate water supply. And yet the remnants of the
irrigation works, the multitude of dry wells and cisterns in places
which are desert today can be taken as an indication that the area
had a much larger population and a more advanced agricultural
society in antiquity than at present. The ancient histories of
Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan abound with illustrations

BEDOUINS MJ4 166X

already settled, have resumed their nomadic mode of existence when political conditions permitted it.[1] M. F. Jamali mentions a number of instances where fully settled tribes of Iraq turned semi-nomadic. Joseph Baraslavsky concludes[2] that certain families of the Tayaha tribe in the Negev seem to have descended from the settled population of Zoar. A. Konikoff states[3] that economic reasons forced settled families of southern Transjordan to form themselves into tribes and adopt the way of life best suited to desert conditions. Max Oppenheim mentions[4] that the powerful Howeitat tribe of Transjordan descended from merchants and peasants.

Classification of Nomads

The constant changes of the social structure make a proper classification of Bedouin society extremely complicated. 178 361 233 621

Bonné divides[5] the nomadic population into the following groups:

a. Desert Bedouin who are the genuine nomads roving over the vast areas lying between the Syrian desert in the north and the center of the Arabian peninsula in the south, and who engage in camel-raising exclusively.

b. Steppe Bedouin who, in addition to camels, also keep large numbers of cows, sheep and goats, and wander in the steppe, nearer the cultivation.

---

1. Jamali, 1934, p. 67
2. ברסלבסקי, 1946, pp. 89 - 100
3. Konikoff, 1946, p. 18
4. Oppenheim, 1943, p. 291
5. Bonné, 1948, pp. 302 seq. 341

361 c. Semi-Bedouin who occupy a position between Bedouin and
178 Fellahin. They are already engaged in agriculture.
233
621 While they still live in tents, they ultimately turn to the construction of permanent huts and houses.

Muller introduces the following classifications[1]

1. Nomadic Tribes

361 a. Camel tribes, so called because they engage primarily
233 in camel-breeding although they possess flocks of sheep. They are the true Bedouin of Syria, all belonging to The Aneneh and Shammar groups.[2] Their mobility enables them to maintain a 600 - 800 kil. radius of migration. They wander in the desert from September till late in June when they return to the border of the cultivated zone in order to trade their surplus livestock and purchase necessary supplies. They do not display the least interest in sedentarization.[3]

X [166]

b. Sheep tribes, so called because they are chiefly preoccupied with intensive sheep-raising. The need for water for their animals restricts their wandering in time and in space. Early in the spring, before the

---

1. Muller, 1931, pp. 96 seq.
2. The study of V. Muller is based on his observations of tribal life in Syria.
186 3. This statement was made by V. Muller in 1931. It seems highly questionable that within 18 years the situation among the true Bedouin should have changed so radically to enable Fawaz Sha'lan, Chief of the Ruala, to declare that "all the tribesmen now wanted land" (for settlement) cf. New York Times, September 6, 1949. Even changing circumstances have never had such an effect on the conservative mentality of the Bedouin, and it seems, therefore, that the declaration of Sha'lan, made for political reasons, must be taken with a note of caution.

BEDOUINS MJ4
JORDAN
361
166K
178

Another example of this attitude is the statement of General Sir Percy Cox before a meeting of the Royal Central Asian Society: "The true Bedouin are attractive people, and I hope they will not be swept away too rapidly with the spread of civilization."[1]

This type of approach has often found its way into official records of the British Colonial Administration. In the Special Report on the Administration of Iraq we find the statement that "the tribe has little to gain and much to lose by settling."[2] The report becomes slightly ridiculous when it refers to the body-lice and the unwashed clothes of the Bedouin as "clean dirt."[3]

Epstein's study, however, must be subjected to criticism on several points. He attributes the progressive impoverishment of the desert Bedouin largely to the decline of the camel market and the tracing of the political boundary lines. While recognizing that not all the Bedouin can be reduced to a sedentary life, he maintains that the problems of Transjordan can be solved only by settlement of the nomadic population. There seems to be an exaggeration in the significance which Epstein attaches to an economic crisis among the Bedouin. Developments clearly show that the nomads are quick in making changes within their pastoral economy, from camel-breeding to sheep-raising, but reluctant to take up cultivation. Although camel economy is disintegrating, this phenomenon in itself does not necessarily lead to a permanent impov-

---

1. Glubb, 1935, p. 31
2. Special Report, 1932, p. 185
3. Ibid.

BEDOUINS MJ4
JORDAN

361 erishment of the nomads. The economic crisis may be temporary, till
x166 adjustments within the nomad economy have been carried out. The
178 need for the camel has declined, but the importance of the sheep and goats has remained unchanged. Sheep and goats supply the people of the area with meat, dairy products and wool.

In fact, the suggestion may be ventured that in the near future the importance of the pastoral economy will considerably increase when the Arab masses will change to a healthier, more balanced diet which presently lacks vital protein elements.

According to Epstein the transition from nomadism to agriculture is made urgent by the unprofitability of camel-breeding, stoppage of raiding(heretofore a source of revenue), and the partitioning of the Syrian Desert. While these phenomena undoubtedly had serious repercussions in the Bedouin world, they do not seem to be chiefly responsible for the disintegration of tribal society and pastoral economy.

CHAPTER VI

233 <u>The Camel Economy of the Nomads and Recent Changes</u>
178

In the past the economy of the Bedouin was principally based on camel-breeding. With the construction of railways in the Middle East and the introduction of the automobile in the desert, the value of the camel declined rapidly and substantially. Prices

BEDOUINS MJ4

slumped from LP 20 before the First World War to LP 4-5 or even 233 178
less in the thirties. 1)

"Prior to the war there were good markets for Iraq's camels 233
in Syria, Turkey and Persia, in addition to the large numbers 178
required for transport purposes in Iraq itself. Since the 439
war, many railways have been constructed throughout the Middle East and the road systems of all countries have been greatly extended and improved. These roads are now all served by a large and increasing number of motor cars and lorries which have to a great extent taken the place of camel transport, thus practically removing the income to the Bedouins from their sale of camels." 2)

There was in the past a substantial demand for camel's meat, particularly in Egypt. But figures show that the import of camels into Egypt declined sharply since the end of the First World War. The import of camels into Egypt averaged prior to World War 1 (1899-1912) 41 137 per year, 3) in the post-war years up till 1937 only 28 137. 3) Figures and statements of observers indicate that the Egyptian camel market has contracted considerably since the end of the First World War. Although there has recently been a rise in consumption of camel's meat in Egypt, 4) the camel industry has lost its importance.

A classic Bedouin country such as Transjordan exported in 1929

---

1. Epstein, 1937, February
2. Special Report, 1932, p. 185
3. Epstein, 1939, p. 177
4. The number of camels slaughtered in public slaughtering houses amounted to:

12 082	in	1944
22 121		1945
27 218		1946 cf. Annuaire, 1947, p. 137

233 only 3 437 camels,[1] and within a short time this trade became so
●178 insignificant that since 1937 camel export figures were no longer
439 listed in official statistical abstracts. Although 40 000 nomads of Transjordan are classified as full Bedouin, they cannot possibly live on camel-breeding. The following figures will show the dwindling camel stock in Transjordan:

1927	13 800	2)
1929	33 500	2)
1935	3 400	2)
1943	6 000	2)
1948	2 500	3)

Figures are probably understated as information on animal holdings was furnished for taxing purposes, but they indicate the trend.

The decline of camel trade and the slump in market prices have severely hit the camel-breeding Bedouin. Transjordan was selected as an example, but the same phenomenon is apparent among the nomads of Syria and Iraq.

Changes within the pastoral economy

361 The camel Bedouin coming from the Arabian desert into the
x178 lands of the Fertile Crescent will sooner or later become a sheep
166 nomad. This transformation has been going on for centuries, long before the decline of the camel market made it necessary. The change was in the past an adaptation of the pastoral economy to

---

1. Epstein, 1939, p. 180
2. International Yearbooks of Agricultural Statistics for 1931/2 and 1940/41
3. Final Report, 1949, Part II, p. 10

BEDOUINS MJ4
361
178
166
233

the natural conditions of the environment, while in recent years it has also been an adjustment to economic circumstances.

The type of animal industry is determined by geographic factors and climatic conditions. In Iraq "in many parts of the alluvial lowlands, terrain is too soft and swampy, so that those animals (camels) are few outside the steppes."[1] Syria, especially the northern part, where rigorous winters frequently occur, is not an ideal region for camel-breeding while in parts of the Arabian desert sheep and goats cannot survive.

233
2) 439

The profitability and the increase of sheep and goat rearing is apparent from the following Transjordan export-trade figures:

	1937	1939	1941	1943
goats	6 988	7 637	32 638	31 041
sheep	12 064	37 896	56 735	52 487

While the camel trade declined, the sheep and goat business has been constantly rising.

233
659
361

Mr. Epstein states[3] that sheep raising is more lucrative when practiced in permanent settlements which do not have to fear losses incurred as result of inter-tribal raiding. With the establishment of Public Security, however, raids have practically ceased, and the desert has been made secure. Today, throughout the area the animal industry is largely in the hands of the nomads.[4]

---

1. Fisher, 1950, p. 362
2. Kamikoff, 1946, p. 112 Table 16
3. Epstein, 1938, p. 228
4. In Iraq the breeding of sheep is practiced almost exclusively by the nomadic population, cf. Royal Institute, 1950, p. 259

68: Neubart S-4 (no date) 1952 M1 Middle East
BEDOUINS MJ4

CHAPTER VIII

The Transition of the Nomad to Agriculture

Beyond the adjustments which the nomads were forced to make within their pastoral economy, settlement on land was appreciably accelerated during the past few decades. 166X 178

The transition of pastoral nomads to an agricultural life is an uninterrupted process in the history of the tribes migrating from the Arabian Desert to the fertile areas which border it. But in recent years the pace of Bedouin sedentarization was accelerated under the impact of social, political and economic developments in the Middle East.

Sedentarization of the Tribes, the spontaneous socio-economic changes

Waves of Bedouin have constantly broken forth from the desert and become ultimately absorbed in the permanent settlement. The process has been slow and gradual. Without the stimulus of powerful external factors, the transformation from the pure desert Bedouin to the fully settled villager may have taken centuries to complete.

Settlement of the nomads may take place either in the wake of great military invasions such as the campaigns of Mohammed and his successors, the invasions of the Wahhabi princes, etc.; or as the result of their contact with settled civilization in the course of their regular wanderings. Actually, also Sedentar

---

166 following military invasions is to a considerable extent the
178 outcome of social contact.

In another part of this paper it will be shown how planned, external stimuli such as government interference, are effecting Bedouin settlement, but the following pages will discuss the phenomenon of the spontaneous internal, socio-economic change.

174 Tribes in the service of the early Islamic conquerors and the Wahhabi princes began to settle down as they became garrison troops in the conquered territories and ultimately the military administrators of the provinces. They established themselves in the vicinity of the villages and cities in order to keep an eye on the subject people. In the great adventure of conquest the Bedouin mode of life went overboard. A different climate may have forced the nomads to change over to breeding other types of livestock. Cruder weather conditions may have obliged them to abandon the tent for more solid living quarters. In spite of the Bedouin's scornful attitude towards the settled people the next step was usually a growing interest in the agricultural society around them and a gradual imitation of its habits and activities.

On the whole it can be observed that while in the Arabian Desert Bedouin society seems incapable of undergoing any change whatsoever, in the steppe near cultivated areas it is destined to decay and disappear. 1)

---

1. Montagne, 1947, pp.112-113

BEDOUINSMJ4

In our days sedenterization is the product of the nomad's 166X
contact with settled society during the regular periods of his 177
encampment on the outskirts of the cultivated land.

At present, the tribal population of Syria, Iraq, Palestine 166X
(Israel) and Transjordan (Jordan) is in all stages of transition 178 ●
to a sedentary existence. A. S. Kirkbridge has outlined [1] the
various stages that the Transjordan nomad passes on his journey
to the settled life of an agriculturalist. With insignificant
changes the description of the steps can be made applicable to
the process of sedenterization as a whole.

Stages of Sedenterization 166X

1. The true desert Bedouin, raising mainly camels, [2] lives 221
in a world where nature makes cultivation impossible. 434
He migrates in accordance with the existence of water 361
and grazing and supplements his meager income by raiding
if conditions permit. He despises the villagers.

2. In spite of the contempt that the Bedouin have for the 609
settled peasants they come to realize that the fellah 434
lives a more comfortable life and enjoys a better diet,
compared to the standards of the nomad.

3. The next step is the occupation of cultivable land by 166X
the nomadic tribe. Agriculture is practiced only as a 361
241

1/ Kirkbridge, 1945, March-April

2/ Kirkbridge does not discuss the Bedouin that came from Arabia subsisting exclusively on camel-breeding, since practically all Transjordanian nomads have crossed the first stage, the conversion of exclusive camel economy to mixed pastoral economy of sheep and camel-breeding.

X166 supplemental means of livelihood. The tribesmen stay on
361 their fields only to harvest and then to sow next year's
241 crop. Then they migrate with their flocks in search of pastures. But they soon realize the drawbacks of protracted absence:

a. the grain will be eaten by birds and insects before it takes root

b. neighbors will graze their herds on the fields.

Sooner or later the amateur cultivator comes to the conclusion that it will pay him to remain nearer his land.

X166 c. The decision to remain close to the cultivated land
241 implies the first real change in the nomad's mode of living:

a. the radius of migration must be reduced

b. the restriction of movement, in turn, makes it mandatory to reduce the amount of livestock in proportion to the grazing areas within the limited wandering orbit.

c. the fewer the animals, the greater the dependence of the tribe on cultivation.

X166 At this phase the nomads still live in tents. But in
178 raising crops, they adopt more and more the methods of the sedentary neighbors.

437 In the trading of the surplus grain the behavior of the

---

nomads is uneconomic. As the tribe is getting set to 437
move right after harvest time, the surplus crop must
be sold when the price of grain is at its lowest.

5. The nomads soon realise that it would be more profitable 166X
to store the surplus and wait until he can get good 178 ●
prices for it. They hire builders to erect store-houses 251
for them. These are placed in charge of watchmen engaged
from the nearest village.

The disadvantages of this procedure become soon apparent:

a. the hired guards may not be honest

b. a raid may occur during the absence of the tribe.
The watchmen would not risk their lives to defend
somebody else's property.

The nomad reaches the inevitable conclusion that he must
keep his tent all the time next to his storehouse in order
to protect his possessions.

6. As the nomad remains in the same place all the time, he 166X
sees no point in putting up with the discomforts of life 178
in a tent. When he builds and occupies a house, the
transition is completed.

The evolutionary process of transformation is not always
the same. Kirkbride only describes its external aspects, but
it must be realised that the conservative Bedouin clings
tenaciously to his tribal traditions which he will not give

---

166 up for the sake of economic self-improvement.

178 The nomad who has settled creates a vacuum on the fringes of the desert which is filled by other desert tribes destined to undergo the same evolution, and thus the process of sedentarization goes on indefinitely.

CHAPTER IX

Survey of Recent Developments that Affected Bedouin Society

Saudi Arabia

133 Except for a few fertile oases, the vast area of Saudi Arabia consists entirely of arid desert and steppes which are green only for a short period in the winter. Arabia is the cradle and the classic country of the Bedouin.

636 The rule of Ibn Saud has been the turning point in the
166 history of Central Arabia. In his drive to found a powerful state, Ibn Saud realized that he must settle the Bedouin within his frontiers if the political structure he created was to last. Citizens, united in purpose and attached to the soil, and not roving nomads, constitute a reliable element which can assure permanency to a state organization.

656 To overcome the traditional tribal disunity, Ibn Saud inspired
186 the Bedouin with the doctrines of Wahhabi puritanism which gave them a consciousness of unity. The Ikhwan[1] (brethern, Wahhabi confraternity), founded by Ibn Saud in 1912, is the modern revival

---

1. 1912 is the date usually given for the founding of the Ikhwan. cf. Royal Institute, 1950, p. 85
According to Arnold Toynbee, however, the Ikhwan was founded in 1910. cf. Royal Institute, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 261

educational needs of the tribes.

This policy aimed at introducing improvements into the Bedouin mode of living without changing it.

Some of the sheikhs made serious attempts to settle the tribesmen on their estates. The Hadidiyin began in the 30's to cultivate on the estates of their sheikh.[1] Rakan, the sheikh of the Sba'a, has been consistently trying to make the members of his tribe engage in agriculture.[2]

Apart from minor successes the attempts of sedentarization were largely premature. While economic changes and a taste for modern living induced a great number of the sheikhs to abandon nomadism and settle down, the majority of the tribesmen preferred to continue their pastoral activities and their traditional migrations. Even economic disasters in the desert did not appreciably accelerate the pace of their sedentarization.

In 1931, for example, the Syrian Bedouin lost 30 - 40 per cent of their animals in the wake of inclement weather conditions.[3] 1931/32 was also a season of exceptional drought when certain tribes lost 50 per cent of their camels and 80 per cent of their sheep.[4] The desert was strewn with animals that died of hunger. The critical situation among the tribes prompted the French Mandatory Government[5] to encourage the nomads to settle down to an agricultural life. Fertile land and implements were freely dis-

---

1. Oppenheim, 1939, p. 298
2. ibid., p. 85
3. Rapport, 1931, p. 98
4. Rapport, 1932, p. 91
5. The French High Commission maintained a special tribal service

[I.E. GOVERMENTAL REFORMS.. ANALYST]

SYRIA BEDOUINS MJ4

mently settled in the neighborhood of Homs and Hama. The Ismaea, (part of the Sba'a) began agriculture after the First World War.[1] The Hesene who had started cultivation already at the end of the 19th century,[2] are settling down in the villages which they own east of Homs.[3] Several thousand tribesmen of the Fed'an work in the fields belonging to the estates of their sheikh Mejbem, although the majority of the tribesmen prefer livestock-breeding to cultivation.[4] In the Jezirah, in Hauran, in the Homs-Hama-Aleppo region and in other parts of the country tribes are abandoning their nomadic mode of life and begin to engage in agriculture, first as supplementary, then as primary occupation. Ultimately they become fully settled peasants.

361 241 166K

This process has been going on ever since the Bedouin have infiltrated into Syria. In recent years the slow pace of transition was somewhat quickened under the impact of rapidly changing conditions in Syria, but not as the result of economic adversities which plagued the nomads for a season or two. A catastrophe in the pastoral economy will not cause the Bedouin to turn to agricultural pursuits. After the drought years of 1931 and 1932 the situation of the Bedouin was desperate, but the abundant season of 1933 made the nomads forget the sufferings of preceding

361 241 166K 178

---

1. Oppenheim, 1939, p. 83
2. ibid., p. 84
3. ibid., p. 85
4. Hassan, 1930, p. 496

361
241 years. There was not much of a response to the efforts of the
X166 government during 1934 and 1935 to encourage settlement on land.
●178

X166 Where sedenterization took place it was the social process
178 of assimilation, stimulated by economic, social and political factors. Where societies meet, the phenomenon of assimilation is inevitable; one section of the social group may be more rapidly affected than the other, but even if no extraordinary conditions arise, the evolutionary process of assimilation and subsequent sedenterization will take its course and ultimately embrace all strata of society.

361 Tribal leadership spearheaded the movement towards sedenter-
X166 isation which by 1935 was sufficiently advanced among the tribal groups of the Aleppo-Homs-Hama region for 14 tribes representing 3 500 tents or 15 000 individuals to be placed by the authorities under a regime of ordinary administration.[1)]

423 For those nomads who are at present ready to settle down,
425 the greatest problem is that of land-tenure. Bedouin tribes as a
X166 whole have more land at their disposal than they can possibly exploit by agricultural cultivation. The area inhabited by the nomads is not less than 10 693 000 hectares.[2)] However, when the tribesmen are willing to take up agriculture, they find that all the tribal land has become the private property of the sheikhs.

---

1. Rapport, 1936, pp. 26-27
2. Salem, 1950 p. 355

Jaberat, Remajra and the Saidiyin. Until recently these nomads were chiefly engaged in sheep and goat rearing, while camel-breeding has been progressively abandoned. 361 233

Already in the 1930's all the Beersheba tribes were in an advanced stage of the process of transition to permanent settlement. While before the First World War the Negev Bedouin depended almost exclusively on stock-breeding, in 1931 42 868 of them claimed cultivation, and only 5 113 animal rearing, as their chief source of livelihood.[1] 166x 233

This development was the result of a series of economic factors: the decline of the camel market,[2] successive years of drought and famine in the Negev,[3] the increased value attached to land in the wake of Zionist land purchases and the ready market that agricultural produce found in the growing Jewish settlements. 178 166x

Many Bedouin began to attend to cultivation in a more regular fashion although they remained for the time being semi-nomads wandering with their flocks except for the seasons of sowing and harvesting. 361 241 166x

The sheikhs and more prominent members of the tribes began 342

---

1. Report of 1931 census of Palestine
2. This loss was largely compensated by breeding other types of livestock.
3. More than half of the years 1874 - 1909 were seasons of drought. The war years 1914-18 constituted a continuous period of famine the severity of which the Negev had not experienced prior to the war. cf: עארף אל-עארף, 1933, ע' 150-151

658 for the southern tribes of Transjordan. The second desert school follows the movement of the northern tribes, classes being alternately held at Muaqqar and at Azraq, both in the Amman district. 1)

X166 In general it must be stated that the creation of suitable
656 conditions for tribal settlement was attempted on a scale which
241 was wholly inadequate, the chief obstacles being the lack of a concrete policy and the financial means to implement it. Nevertheless, in Transjordan, the majority of the nomads are actually ready to settle down if the opportunity is given them. Larger tribes such as the Howeitat and Beni Hasan are increasingly practicing agriculture as their main occupation. Smaller tribes, living in northern Kerak, have always held cultivation in high esteem. 2) Tribesmen from Belqa are engaged as agricultural laborers on the estates of the Beni Sakhr, 3) although most sheikhs of the Jordan tribes have their lands worked by permanent tenants, fellahin who come from the Nablus and Hebron areas of Palestine. 4)

• 178 Summary of the Bedouin settlement movement in the area
X166

a. spontaneous socio-economic change

The internal, sociological change among the nomads is the ever-operating phenomenon of assimilation to the settled society which they contact.

How the transition gradually occurs among the tribes

---

1. Report, 1938, p. 351
2. Janssen, 1908, p. 243
3. Epstein, 1938, p. 233
4. Poliak, 1942

JORDAN BEDOUINS MJ4

coming in from the desert and moving northward, can be observed in the geographic distribution of the population of Transjordan. The Southern Ma'an district and the parts east of the Hejaz railway are the domains of the Bedouin. Southern Balqa and the entire Karak district are inhabited by semi-nomads, already settled on the land, but still living in tents and retaining their tribal organization. In Ajloun and the northern part of Balqa the settled villager predominates.

178 ● 166X 131 166X

b. external factors and planned change 166X

Bedouin settlement on land considerably progressed under the impact of:

a. development of the area with subsequent limitation of pasture lands
b. the measures of the governments
c. the examples of the sheikhs and their attempts to settle the tribesmen

CHAPTER X

Tribal Land and the Role of the Sheikh in Bedouin Settlement Since the 19th Century 421 425

With the introduction of the Land Registration Law of 1859 most of the tribal land in the Ottoman Empire became the property of the sheikhs.

The individual tribesmen as well as the settled villagers

---

land reform on which successful tribal settlement will ultimately 421
depend, but as the land-owning families exercise control over the indigenous administrations, the prospects for sweeping changes do not seem bright.

Transformation of the Sheikh

With the process of sedentarization the tribal sheikh under- 166X
goes a profound political and social transformation.

In the traditional tribal society inter-tribal political 578
activities were confined to disputes over water and grazing rights. 622
Since the 19th century sheikhs have become involved in big power 664
politics. Bedouin history since the First World War abounds with cases of tribal chiefs being pre-occupied with the political issues of the country. At present the tribal leaders constitute a very active element in the parliamentary life of Syria and Iraq. While the sheikhs of the Transjordanian tribes have in the past not taken a prominent part in the political activities of their country, they have taken sides in the main controversial issue of anglophile government circles versus pan-Arab, anti-foreign Nationalists. Mithal Pasha, the sheikh of the Beni-Sakhr, was the avowed friend of the Mufti while Hamad el Jasi, the sheikh of the Howeitat was an active supporter of Abdullah. 1)

The social changes which the sheikh undergoes are consider- 622
able. His household becomes substantially enlarged by addition 178
of a great number of slaves, specialists in various tasks. The wives of the sheikh have chamber maids at their disposal.

---

1. Oppenheim, 1943, pp. 182-183

178 [493] 622 It is not a rarity to see an automobile under the tent of the sheikh, even when he still wanders and camps with his tribe. Gradually the chiefs establish luxurious residences, equipped with all the comforts of modern living. At this stage the sheikh will spend most of the time away from the tribe, favoring the social, economic and political activities of the sedentary population.

177 622 178 An instructive example of the changes in the social status of the powerful sheikh is the case of the Ruala. The Ruala tribesmen still belong to the few remaining true Bedouin. Their former Sheikh, Emir Nuri al-Sha'lan, however, showed already before World War I his preference for a house to a tent. His grandson Fawaz, the present Emir of the tribe, was in his youth a genuine Bedouin, but later his mode of living became thoroughly westernized.[1]

619 178 566 The tribesmen will not remain unaffected by this development. For a while they try tenaciously to preserve the nomadic mode of existence, but sooner or later they will become the exploited tenants and share-croppers on the estates of their leaders.

566 622 During the Mandatory regime the absentee landlords lost much of their grip on the cultivators, but the tenants of the tribal sheikhs are still in a virtual state of serfdom. In some cases the tribal chief still has complete authority over the

---

1. Oppenheim, 1943, p. 108

241 731 that were willing to engage in agriculture after the economic catastrophes of either the early 30's or the late 40's, because this tribal group is not yet ready for settlement. Similarly in Syria, as has been pointed out above, the calamitous season 1931/32 did not appreciably accelerate sedentarization. While the experienced Bedouin will take livestock losses and subsequent starvation in the desert as a matter of course, the novice cultivator will not face a harvest failure with the same equanimity. X166 731 In 1936 many Transjordan nomads had taken up cultivation for the first time, but the loss of their crops discouraged them so much, that they returned to the desert.[1]

X241 X166 178 Profound changes are, nevertheless, taking place in the mentality of the Bedouin. As a result of tribal disintegration many nomads have become increasingly interested in sedentary life. When the nomad sees the sheikh, alienated from the tribe, enjoy luxuries beyond his dreams, he may also want to improve his standard of living and enjoy the "comforts" of the settled villager whose existence is prosperous compared by the Bedouin's standard of life. Pride may keep the nomad from working on the land, but nevertheless there are now hundreds of Iraqi and Syrian villages inhabited by people who were formerly nomads. Some of them still maintain tribal customs although they have been settled for a long time and severed the relations with their original tribes.[2]

---

1. Report, 1936, p. 349
2. El-Shihaby, 1950, pp. 278 seq.

BEDOUINS MJ4

Social transformation of the Bedouin

When the Bedouin settle down, they gradually adopt the fellah's mode of living. As their contact with village and city increases, they become familiar with modern implements, matches, oil-lamps, etc.

The Ghawarneh of Northern Palestine, for example, live like peasants engaged in intensive cultivation.[1] They grow rice, maize and peas. The women are occupied with mat weaving, the men join them in this work during the slack season in the fields. They still dress like Bedouin, and most of them live in huts. There are stone houses in which the family chiefs dwell.[2] After settlement, Bedouin customs and habits give way gradually to those of the fellahin.

In the Khiss-Finn refugee camp (southern Syria) there are Arab refugees who claim to be members of tribes that lived until recently in Upper Galilee, around Lake Tiberias, near Nazareth and Safed. In July 1949, an inquiry was conducted among the members of the camp concerning tribal habits and health conditions.[3] The members of the tribes were agricultural folk, some small traders and artisans. A part of them used to live permanently in stone houses, others dwelt in houses during the winter months, in tents during the harvesting season. In a number of tribes only the wealthy had houses, the poorer members lived permanently in tents. Most of the tribal people were settled, one group for only 50 to 70 years.

---

1. This was the situation prior to the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.
2. Ashkenazi, 1938, p. 46
3. Cotrell, 1950

Economic

361 233 178 241

The Pastoral economy of the Bedouin [1] has been seriously affected by the rapid development of the area. Former pasture lands are increasingly brought under cultivation with subsequent restriction of tribal grazing areas.

Although an exaggerated significance has been attached to the effects of the declining demand for the camel, this factor has dealt a severe blow to the economy of the true desert Bedouin who subsisted in the past exclusively on camel-breeding.

Social

178 621

Tribal society has progressively disintegrated as the result of the sheikh's emergence as a big landowner. The interest which tribal leadership displays in agricultural life, is bound to influence the thinking and acting of the tribesmen. Sooner or later, they will follow the examples set by their sheikhs and settle down.

---

1. The statement of Alfred Bonne that "the term Bedouin economy is a contradiction in itself" and that "this economy is no economy in the accepted sense of the word" (Bonne, 1948, p. 346) may be exaggerated because the nomads make a valuable contribution to the economy by:
   a. profitably utilizing the scanty patches of grass that grow for fleeting moments over widely separated stretches of desert area, a resource which would remain otherwise exploited
   b. by supplying the people of the area with their needs of meat, wool and dairy products
   c. producing for local industry and export trade items like wool, skins, hides, and live animals and their edible produce.

178
621 As a member of a well-knit patriarchal society the individual [illegible] enjoyed a relative sense of security, and his precarious existence in the desert was made possible by tribal solidarity and experienced and devoted leadership. With the dissolution of the traditional ties the Bedouin may ultimately come to realize the benefits that will accrue to him as part of a new social order, that of the settled community.

Political

Y166
657 The administrations of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Jordan
361 and Israel have been concerned with integrating the nomadic element within their borders in the national community.

Saudi Arabia and Israel have formulated and are carrying out definite settlement policies, while the other governments of the area stimulate sedentarization by the creation of suitable conditions. Inadequate as the measures of the governments may be in themselves, they are bound to show results, once the disintegration of the tribal group is sufficiently advanced.

In order to make Bedouin sedentarization a lasting success, government-sponsored settlement projects must be designed and carried out.

For a long time the issue of "settling the tribes" has been a political slogan in the cities of the Arab countries, but only infrequently have the administrations of Syria, Iraq and Jordan taken concrete steps in direction of Bedouin settlement.

---

648 BEDOUINS MJ4
X166 Welfare Seminar of 1950 cautioned against offering the tribal
423 chiefs large stretches of land on which the mass of the tribesmen
622 would become a class of agricultural laborers. 1)

APPENDIX

X166 Recommendations for the Formulation of Settlement Policies
●178

There is a definite need for constructive government-sponsored settlement schemes.

It has been recognized that specific problems, presented by old and deeply rooted traditions, must be taken into consideration: 2)

a. the element of persuasion and education, the mental adjustment of the Bedouin to the new conditions. Projects of amelioration and irrigation or schemes of free land distribution may aid the fellah and the nomad, but it must be recognized that not all the Bedouin will abandon nomadic life voluntarily, even when offered free land. The traditional contempt for agricultural work must be counteracted by persuasion and education.

b. the need for introducing gradual changes. Successful sedentarization of the nomads cannot proceed more rapidly than their mental adjustment to the new conditions. Where the Bedouin are not gradually prepared for agricultural life, they will become landowners, but not cultivators. They will turn into "tent-dwellers who depend for their living on the rents paid by their fellaheen-tenants." 3)

---

1. El-Shihaby, 1950, p. 280
2. Poliak, 1942
3. ibid.

I. Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

609 *alaik* (I am your suppliant, I enter upon God's pardon and yours). The person so addressed is bound to protect the suppliant, with his own life if necessary, and is bound always to fight for him, or get him to a place of safety if he is being pursued or is in immediate danger.

HOW DAKHÁLA IS CLAIMED

A man being followed by enemies meets a Badawin girl cutting firewood in the desert, or her mother spinning outside her tent alone, and begs *dakhála*. The girl or her mother is bound to offer protection, and if the danger is near, she will call out for help (*tasih*). Immediately the whole community will rush (*faza'a*) to her aid. The man will be sent to a place of safety. He will not be surrendered.*

[628] A man may enter the house of the brother of a man he has just killed. If he demands *dakhála* he is safe for three days, after that time he must say where he wants to go, and he will be seen safely to his destination. This done, the brother of the man he has killed is free to resume his just blood feud.

HOW DAKHÁLA WORKS

A man is chased for a crime, he rushes into a tent (or house) and begs *dakhála*. The owner of the tent is bound not only to grant sanctuary, but, after feeding the visitor and clothing him, must see him safely to the house, tent or tribe where the suppliant thinks he will be safe. After that the protector's responsibility ends.

So strict is the law of *dakhála* among the Badawin that a man carrying the "cane" (marked with his *wasm*) of a shaikh with whom he has taken sanctuary, may safely travel through the length and breadth of a tribe's territory, even though there may be persons there who have a blood feud with him.

609 178 In countries like modern Sa'udi Arabia, and in the new Iraq where the authorities, following the Persian example, are unfortunately, and I think mistakenly, trying to break down tribal customs, the practice of *dakhála* is unpopular with those who rule, and the police con-

* Jaal the Kenite of Bible fame broke the law of *dakhála* when she slew the sleeping Sisera, who clearly believed himself safe in her tent. She also broke all laws of hospitality, as Sisera had come to her tent and partaken of her food.

I: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

stantly find themselves thwarted by it. This is a pity, for if properly understood there is nothing shameful or anti-social in the system. It would be wiser for the law to recognise its existence and make use of it and of other time-honoured Arab customs.

In 1933 my friend, Shaikh Lafi ibn Ma'allath of the Mutair (Braih) tribe, a faithful warrior and servant of Bin Sa'ud, was forced to flee to Iraq, because a man pursued by Bin Sa'ud's blockade-police took refuge in his tent, and invoked the law of *dakhdla*. When the police threatened to search for the fugitive the stout-hearted shaikh signalled to his followers and fellow tent-dwellers to close around, and said he would resist the man's arrest by force of arms if necessary. Baulked of their prey the police (all townsmen) went away angry and sullen, and reported the incident to Ibn Jiluwi, their master. Lafi, feeling that he had got a breathing-space, and knowing that he would never be forgiven, fled across the border with his cousins, relatives, women, children, thirty tents in all, never to come back. Had the police bided their time, three days, they could probably have followed and made an arrest. Instead, they drove a faithful and loyal servant of the King into exile.

Cases of a similar nature are legion, and do almost more than anything else to promote bad feeling between the tribal elements of Arabia and the local governments.

The root trouble is, of course, the desire of upstart kings and princes, eager to ape the West, to break down all tribal systems, because they think these mark a backward state of society.

Akin to *dakhdla* is the conception of *wejh* or *tisyar*. This literally means "face". *Be wejh fulan* (lit. "In So-and-So's face") means under the protection or safe conduct of So-and-So, and is a phrase very commonly heard in the desert. The penalties for outraging a person's *dakhdla*, *wejh* or *tisyar* (as the Iraq tribesmen call *wejh*) are very severe indeed; a heavy fine is exacted from any person purposely defying the custom. This fine is called *hashm* or "honour money" in Iraq. A man surrendering to the police another who has claimed *dakhdla* will be relentlessly pursued by the suppliant's relations and will be slain unless he compounds the case by paying *hashm* to the tribe.

The following anecdote of how a British officer was saved by

THE BADU OF SOUTHERN ARABIA

By W. P. THESIGER, D.S.O.

114 Lecture given on September 28, 1949, Lieut.-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, V.C., K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: To-day Mr. Thesiger is going to talk to us about the countries around the Red Sea, with which he has been acquainted since childhood. He was born in Abyssinia. Before the recent war he was with the Sudan Civil Service. In 1940 he was sent to Abyssinia and volunteered for service there with the Ethiopian Patriot Force, in which he was awarded the D.S.O.

Later he was sent on special duty to Damascus and was able to resume his Arabic studies. Since the war he has carried out several remarkable trips to explore the heart of the area known as the "Empty Quarter," and he is now going to tell us about the most recent of these.

101 178 184 I AM going to talk about the Badu of Southern Arabia; that is to say, the camel-owning nomads who live in and around the Empty Quarter. I wish to make it clear that I am talking about the Badu, or Baduin, and not about Arabs who cultivate or live in towns, for there is all the difference in the world between them. I do not suppose that a sophisticated young town Arab would be flattered if you referred to him as a Badui, though it is surprising how many of them do proudly claim Badu origin, and I do know that no Badui would like to be called a townsman or cultivator. At first sight the Badu of Southern Arabia appear to be very different from those of the north, but I believe that this difference is largely superficial and due to the clothes which they wear. I do not think that either a Sa'ari from the deserts just north of the Hadhramaut or a Wahibi from South-Eastern Oman would feel himself much out of place in an encampment of the Rualla. On the other hand, I think that a townsman from Aden or Muscat would always be conspicuous in Damascus. I wish also to make it quite clear that I am describing conditions in Southern Arabia and not in Arabia as a whole. In the past Badu life was everywhere much the same, harder in some places and easier in others. The last quarter of a century has, however, seen the most revolutionary changes in the north. There Ibn Saud has imposed his iron will upon the tribes. He has subjected the nomad to the rule of the settled Arab, stamped out raiding, and taxed the Badui as well as the cultivator. The same process has been carried out in Trans-Jordan, in Syria, and in [177] Iraq. It was largely the use of the motor-car which made it possible to bring the Badu under control, for that robbed them of their age-old inaccessibility. Previously they had only to retire into the desert to be safe from pursuit, but now they are at the mercy of a motorized patrol, unable to get away and with nowhere to hide.

178 619 Cars have, however, not yet penetrated into the southern desert, and there the old life still goes on. I do not suppose, except that the Badu are now armed with rifles, that their way of life has greatly changed since the times of Abraham. In the south they are still dominant and even unchallenged. It is true that before they enter the valley of the Hadhramaut

178 619 they must leave their rifles at a police post, but once they have climbed back on to the escarpment they are free to do as they like, subject only to the restraints of tribal life. Similarly, while they are inside the towns of Inner Oman, where the Imam has established law and order, they must behave themselves, but once they are outside the walls they can only be controlled by diplomacy and not by force, while everywhere in the Dhahirah of Northern Oman jealous and often hostile sheikhs vie with each other in the lavishness of their hospitality and the scale of their gifts to win the support of the Badu. There no sheikh can enforce his authority over the tribes, and none of them would try, lest by doing so he should alienate their support in time of need.

133 712 To understand the Badu character and way of life you must understand the land in which they live—a harsh, unforgiving land which conditions their lives so that they, too, are hard, hard in body and mind. They live in the desert—that is to say, in country which, judged by ordinary standards, is waterless. This applies equally to the barren, broken limestone mountains near the southern coast, to the flat, featureless gravel plains, and to the sands of the Empty Quarter itself, where the mountainous dunes, some of which are 700 feet high, run one behind the other for hundreds of miles. There are, of course, some wells in this desert, but they are usually few and far between; the Sa'ar country has two permanent wells in it, Manwakh and Zamakh; the Manahil country has three or four. Thus in an area the size of Norfolk there might be two wells. I have myself twice travelled four hundred miles between wells. I admit that this is exceptional, but Badu have raided across these very stretches of desert, riding out and back again without touching at a well. You can think what this means when you realize that this distance is twice as far as from Dover to Edinburgh, and that these Arabs travelled at a speed of three miles per hour, relying only on the water which they could carry with them without foundering their camels, and that the camels themselves did not get a drink until they returned a month later.

137 221 132 233 It seldom rains in this desert; in many parts it has not rained for five years, and I have been in places where not a drop of rain has fallen for twenty-five years. By Badu standards a couple of hours' heavy rain in the year means a good year. They cannot, therefore, cultivate, but have to depend for their livelihood on their small herds of camels, and in quest of the pasturage which springs up after rain they travel great distances. Most of this vegetation is not grass, but desert plants like the succulent yellow-flowering tribulus and heliotrope, and in the sands these plants will remain green after a few days' rain for as long as three and four years. But they do not last so long on the gravel plains and among the hills; in such places, however, grow scattered trees and bushes, such as the 233 acacias, which afford valuable pasturage. Where there is rich grazing the 262 Badu can remain for six and even nine months without water, for their camels get all the moisture they require from these green plants, and camels' milk suffices the Arabs themselves for food and drink. In the heat of summer the camels must be watered once a week, and if there is no well near the grazing on which they have wintered they must move back on to a permanent well and graze their herds as best they can on the

21:Ashkenazi E-4 (no date) 1948 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

101 Any non-nomad is automatically ruled out. But there are tens of thousands of nomadic tribesmen in Syria and 'Irak who live in tents and are continually on the move, but who are not Bedouins, for they do not primarily breed camels, but sheep and donkeys.[66] A Bedouin must also be able to trace his descent from certain recognized pure-bred Bedouin tribes. We find, therefore, that a Bedouin, in the strictest sense, is a camel-breeding nomad of certain specified tribes.[67] There are seven or eight principal tribes in northern Arabia. (1) 'Anazah, the most numerous, fill the greater part of the triangle of the Syrian desert; (2) Sammâr, bound 'Anazah on the south, with a branch in northern 'Irak between the Tigris and Euphrates; (3) Mutair and the Az-Zefir lie in the extreme southeast of our area, while Beni-Sahr, the Hwêtat, and Beni Atiyeh occupy the southwest corner. In addition to these, however, there are certain ignoble tribes scattered everywhere among the Bedouins.[68]

178 It is also significant to learn what their social and economic status in Syria, 'Irak, and the Arabian Peninsula was under Turkish rule and before 1914 as well as under British, French, and Saudi-Arabian administration ever since then. Will this completely pure-nomadic stock succeed in preserving their ancient mode of life in the framework of the industrialization of the Near and Middle East? Or, will they be forced to retire to their lairs of old, the Arabian Peninsula, to preserve their traditions? Or, will they be forced by slow process to give up their completely nomadic habits, turn by degrees into semi-nomads and successively to semi-farmers, attached to the soil, until they finally are settled and firmly attached to a permanent abode? And we learn, from the past, that the 'Anazah tribes will not be able to continue for long in their present ancient mode of life, preserving all customs and circumstances of nomad life, because the Near East and Middle East are changing from patriarchal-feudal into progressive, civilized countries with a higher culture and standard of life. This will force a firm and fixed policy with regard to the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes dwelling on the borders and in the deserts to become settled, to make them stop raiding, and give way to a new mode of life. Sovereign states in the Middle East have to initiate a settlement movement to attach them gradually to some fixed abode and to give up their seasonable migrations. The political importance of the Bedouins will therefore become reduced in the future, and the establishment of firm con-

113 [66] Glubb, *The Bedouins of Northern Iraq*, p. 13.

[67] *Idem*, p. 15.

[68] Josef Henninger, *Forschungen in Arabien* (in *Festschrift St. Gabriel zum 50 jährigen Jubiläum*, Wien-Mödling, 1939), pp. 301-339; Glubb, *The Bedouins of Northern Iraq*, p. 13; Musil, *Notes sur la vie sociale, etc.*, p. 79.

ZlnAshkenazi E-4 (no date) 1948 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

178 ●

ural will destroy many of their most attractive qualities: their sturdy independence, their chivalry, their raids, and their poetry. Already their chiefs are showing signs of taking to politics or agriculture, while their ambitious youths are seeking enlistment and promotion in the police. In northern Arabia—touching on 'Irak, Syria, and Trans-Jordan—the Bedouin will lose his influence and most of his distinctive qualities. In Nejd, where a greater proportion of the population is nomadic, the Bedouin may retain some of his importance rather longer. Imperialist rule will see with pity that the good old raid must cease, and representatives of the imperialist rule "hope they will not be swept away too rapidly by the spread of civilization." [69]

And those Bedouin tribes, who refuse to settle down and exchange their tents for houses, who insist upon wandering and living upon camel- and horse-raising, will have to return to those waste lands and plains whence they emerged hundreds of years ago. But even there progressing civilization will hound them, as even the Arabian Peninsula is slowly advancing in this direction under King 'Abd el-'Aziz Eben Sa'ûd, himself of noble and pure nomadic descent. As long as there are deserts in the heart of settled countries, there will also be nomads, nomads who will threaten the borders of these settled countries and their progress. But now as of old, today as in the days of Byzantine and Persian domination, it is the duty of these progressive countries to ward off this threat, not by armies, but by wisely helping these nomads to satisfy their primitive and slender demands, to try and settle them at least partially on waste land and crown land, and to respect their internal customs and ways of life. Such settlement will strengthen the safety and good order of the open roads and highways and of the borders of sown countries in the Near and Middle East.

Orthographic Note

128

The proper orthographic forms of foreign words are listed here in the order in which they occur in the text:

---

69 The words of General Sir Percy Cox. See Gibb, *The Reformer of Northern Iraq*, p. 31. On the other hand, much pioneering research at first hand must be consulted: Rawan, *Tribal Areas and Migration Lines*, etc., pp. 496-497; de Boucheman, *La sédentarisation des nomades du désert de Syrie* (*L'Asie Française*, no. 329, May 1934), pp. 140-143; Taha Hussein, *Literary Life in the Arabic Peninsula* (translated from the Arabic by Martin Springling; *The Open Court*, vol. 46, no. 12, 1932), pp. 838-846.

113

22:Raswan T-5(ca. 1911-1930)1930 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

group of the Weld 'Ali, for instance, in certain winters wander with their powerful allies, the Ruala, southward to the neighborhood of Teyma', returning north again after their mares and camels have foaled.

The third great natural feature is the chain of hills (Ar-Rawaq, Abu Rijmen, and Jebel Bishri) which stretches in an almost straight line from Damascus to Deyr az-Zor on the Euphrates. Sheep-breeding Bedouins are found north of these hills, camel breeders to the south. The sheep breeders occupy a steppe-like rolling country, rich in pasture which lasts into the beginning of summer. Settled areas are nowhere far distant to east and west, and the tribes occupying these steppes will undoubtedly be the first to establish permanent settlements. As far north as Tel el-Abyadh near the Turkish frontier the writer has noticed members of the Fed'an intermarrying with settlers of that region. Mijhem ibn Mheyd, chief of the Fed'an, owns many villages in Syria, and several thousand of his Bedouins are even now at work in the fields, although the majority prefer tending live stock to plowing. The Tayy, one of the purest, most aristocratic Bedouin tribes from central Arabia, are now found in Mesopotamia, far north near Nisibin, where they seldom fold their tents, pack them on camels, and carry them to new pasture grounds. Half of their tents are "permanently" fixed, with reed and clay walls supporting the goat's-hair canvas. Indeed, the Tayy have become a degenerate people!

The Bedouins with the largest pasture circles (those bordering on the Nafud) will probably survive longest as true nomads. These are the great camel breeders, the Ruala and some of the Shammar, who hold the vast tracts of Al-Hamad and Al-Wudiyan between the Nafud and the northern line of hills.

Political Changes

If the problematical political frontiers between the British and French spheres of influence in northern Arabia are maintained, changes may be expected in the migration territories of the Bedouins. The following, in my opinion, might well take place. The tribes whose territories are now cut by the 30th parallel would split, part of them remaining in Ibn Sa'ud's domains and the rest migrating to the north. The continuance of yearly warfare (for the most part in the spring) between the Zana Muslim (Ruala and Weld 'Ali) and other 'Aneze tribes would finally result in an agreement that would assign to the Ruala who remain in Syria the entire Hamad and western part of Al-Wudiyan. The rest of Al-Wudiyan would be given to the 'Amarat, and the steppe country north of the hills to the Fed'an and Sba'a. First the Fed'an and then the Sba'a would gradually become

22:Raswan T-5(ca. 1911-1930)1930 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

settlers, and the 'Amarat might ultimately be induced by the government of 'Iraq to settle in Mesopotamia after the new irrigation projects have been developed. The Ruala would undoubtedly hold out the longest against any such policy, many of them preferring to perish in skirmishes or return to their brothers in central Arabia rather than adopt the life of the settlers. The Weld 'Ali sheep breeders would settle in the neighborhood of Homs and Hama', and the camel breeders among them would remain with the Ruala.

Three hundred years have sufficed to bring the Bedouin tribes who left their central Arabian homeland to the brink of an abyss in which all the romance, beauty, and liberty of their nomadic life will disappear. Whatever one may think about the "backward, medieval, puritanical" rule of Ibn Sa'ud, the domain of this Wahhabi descendant of the Zana Muslim will some day be the last refuge for the few true Bedouin clans that love the old, free, glamorous, roving life better than the stale and degrading existence of the settlers in territories under French or British control.

NOTES ON THE MAPS[1]

Plate V shows tribal boundaries, natural features, and place names. Owing to the confusion resulting from the overlapping of the tribal areas, Figures 1, 2, and 3 have been added representing these territories as differentiated by shading. On these maps reference numbers are given to the following notes explaining certain points of interest in connection with the movements of each tribe. The place names mentioned in these notes will all be found on Plate V.[2]

Detailed tables revealing the internal subdivisions of the various tribes into subtribes, clans, etc., will be found in "A Handbook of Arabia," pp. 45–95, and also scattered through the various volumes of Alois Musil. In many instances these classifications do not correspond. Since the pages on which the tables are found in Musil's publications are not readily determined from the indexes, the following references are included for the benefit of those wishing to make a critical study of the organization of the tribes whose territories are shown on the accompanying maps:

Figure 1. 'Aneze Tribes. Zana Muslim, including the Ruala and Weld'Ali, A. D., pp. 14–16; Weld'Ali. A. D., p. 84. 'Amarat, A. D., p. 52. Fed'an, A. D., p. 55. Sba'a, P., pp. 55, 91. Weld Sleyman, N. N., p. 95.

---

[1] On the maps and in the text of this article Musil's renderings of the spelling of place names and tribal names have, in general, been followed. The transliteration, however, follows the English rather than the continental scheme, even in quotations from Musil's works.

[2] The abbreviations are as follows:

A. D., Alois Musil: Arabia Deserta, *Amer. Geogr. Soc. Oriental Explorations and Studies No. 2*, New York, 1927.

A. P., *idem*: Arabia Petraea, 3 vols., Kaiserliche Akad. der Wiss., Vienna, 1908.

M. E., *idem*: The Middle Euphrates, *Amer. Geogr. Soc. Oriental Explorations and Studies No. 3*, New York, 1927.

N. H., *idem*: The Northern Hejaz, *ibid. No. 1*, New York, 1926.

N. N., *idem*: Northern Nejd, *ibid. No. 3*, New York, 1928.

P., *idem*: Palmyrena, *ibid. No. 4*, New York, 1928.

Handbook, "A Handbook of Arabia," Vol. 1, General, compiled by the Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, British Admiralty, London, 1920(?).

Doughty, C. M. Doughty: Travels in Arabia Deserta, 2 vols., London, 1888; 3rd edition, 1923.

camps move to the Euphrates, or on to the main groups of wells around which cluster tented towns of hundreds of families, odd Sulubba families will remain far out in the desert, drinking from some tiny water hole in a lonely ravine known only to the Sulubba themselves. There they will live almost the lives of wild animals, with only a few sheep or donkeys, hunting gazelle and often dressing in their skins. The Sulubba alone knows the wild animal life of the desert intimately. As a gazelle hunter, his skill is incredible, and many live very largely on gazelle meat and dress in their skins. The Beduins often employ the Sulubba as guides in the desert or consult them regarding routes, grazing, or camping grounds.

Apart from hunting gazelle, and menial work for the Beduins, the Sulubba also live by grazing and breeding animals. Some of them are prosperous and own large flocks of sheep. They have a few camels, but their most distinctive possessions are the white asses. Probably the Sulubba originally bred asses rather than camels for riding purposes, because if they had any good camels the Beduins were likely to covet them. But since no Beduin would stoop to ride an ass, the Sulubba were left in undisputed possession. Some of these animals have marvellously swift paces, and are almost as capable of resisting thirst as is the camel.

During the last ten years, the desert belonging to Iraq, Syria, and Trans-Jordan has been brought under Government control. As a result the Beduins are no longer able to bully the Sulubba quite as unrestrainedly as before and the latter are learning to complain to the police when they are beaten or abused.

In 1919-22, the recrudescence of Wahhabism in central Arabia produced a tremendous outburst